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MEDIA CONTACT: Stephanie Wilson
317.464.4400 x. 126
swilson@che.in.gov

Commissioner Calls on Indiana Colleges to Embrace New Data Measures, Strengthen Connections between Higher Education and Employment

INDIANAPOLIS – At the third-annual State of Higher Education Address, Commissioner Teresa Lubbers called on Indiana colleges to embrace new data measures that better convey the value of college while taking steps to incorporate meaningful internships—and other work-based experiences—as part of their degree programs.

“Indiana can and should be a national leader in measuring the impact of higher education in equipping our graduates to lead fulfilling, productive lives,” said Lubbers. “We must also strive to strengthen the connection between education and employment by making work-based learning a core component of the college experience.”

Measuring College Value

Lubbers announced that the Commission would be partnering with Indiana colleges and the national Gallup organization to measure the satisfaction and well-being of Hoosier graduates.

With funding support from USA Funds and Gallup, the Commission has negotiated a discounted price for colleges that sign up to participate before June 30, 2015. The effort will be based on the national Gallup-Purdue Index, which found that graduates who had a college internship and completed their degrees on time were significantly more positive about their college experience.

Connecting College to Careers

Embracing Governor Pence and Lt. Governor Ellspermann’s goal to add 10,000 internships statewide, Lubbers is encouraging Indiana colleges to expand partnerships with employers and to incorporate work-based learning experiences into their undergraduate degree programs. Lubbers pointed to Gallup data indicating that only 6 percent of graduates strongly agree that they had a meaningful internship or job during college.

“It is abundantly clear that students who have opportunities to apply their classroom learning in a real-world setting are better prepared to meet employer expectations and succeed in their careers,” Lubbers said, noting that most degree programs do not require it. “We want work-and-learn experiences to become the new standard on our campuses and in our classrooms.”

To build momentum for change in this area, the Commission is sponsoring a new statewide *Career Ready* campaign this spring in partnership with educators and employers around the state. The campaign will teach students of all ages about the many pathways to a meaningful career and the workplace experiences—from job shadowing to internships—that will make them more employable upon completing education and training beyond high school.

Visit www.che.in.gov for a transcript and video of the full address or to read the Commission’s “*Reaching Higher, Achieving More*” strategic plan. Learn more about Indiana’s *Career Ready* campaign at CareerReadyIndiana.org.